

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION



GREG GIANFORTE, GOVERNOR

1539 ELEVENTH AVENUE

STATE OF MONTANA

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE: (406) 444-2074
FAX: (406) 444-2684PO BOX 201601
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1601

DECISION MEMO ACTIONS OF A SPECIAL NATURE

Custer County Conservation District Resource Development Grant
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2023
Custer County Conservation District
Administrative
Miles City, MT
Custer County

PURPOSE AND NEED

The Custer County Conservation District currently administers grant funds to offset administrative and other costs of the Yellowstone River Conservation District's river planning efforts. The Department is required to have a formal agreement with recipients of Departmental pass-through funds to supervise the accounting expenditures of funds.

The Yellowstone River Conservation District Council formed to assess the condition of the Yellowstone River and to develop voluntary management practices that support a healthy, sustainable river system. The Yellowstone River Conservation District Council has 10-member conservation districts and is advised by committees of local, state, and federal interested stakeholders.

Annual Work Plan – FY 2021 - 2023

Work Plan Purpose

The YRCDC work plan provides a matrix to the Council, their advisory committees, and staff that outlines objectives, action items, responsible parties, timeframes, and priorities to guide them more effectively toward the achievement of their long-term goals. Additional planning may be necessary to articulate some of the specific actions. This work plan is intended to be a dynamic document, subject to revision as situations and priorities change.

YRCDC Vision & Mission

Working Relationships Yield A Shared Vision... "By encouraging communication and cooperation through collaboration, education, incentives and voluntary action, it is our

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purpose to ensure a healthy river and riparian system capable of sustaining the needs of Montana citizens and the communities we serve."

Goals:

- Provide local leadership in the management of the Yellowstone River.
- Maintain and improve the long-term sustainable uses of the Yellowstone River.
- Maintain a free-flowing river with a healthy regional and local economy.
- Develop programmatic guidelines to Conservation Districts (i.e., to provide consistency with 310 permitting)
- Provide a forum for various interests to cooperate on river issues.
- Influence and encourage action on the Yellowstone River as a collective group.
- Protect the water supply in the Yellowstone River for all uses in Montana and North Dakota.
- Inform/educate the public on resource issues important to the Yellowstone River corridor.
- Encourage incentive-based programs that support voluntary implementation of the Yellowstone River Recommended Practices (YRRPs)
- Encourage continued Yellowstone River research to facilitate a better understanding of the river environment and socioeconomic aspects.

Objective 1: The YRCDC will work closely with their staff, advisory committees, member Conservation Districts, and outside partners to be an effective and efficient organization.

- The Steering Committee will meet with the coordinator and Committee Chairs on a regular basis to review workload activities and priorities. They will also set Council meeting dates and Agendas.
- Develop an annual budget allocating DNRC pass-thru funds and seek additional funding when needed to sustain the Council and Committee operations.
- Continue to communicate Council activities to the Districts.

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Objective 2: Incorporate Yellowstone River Recommended Practices (YRRP) into YRCDC work plans and provide the information to the public and local Conservation Districts

- Work with the Council to provide education and outreach information beneficial to landowners and local Conservation Districts that define factors and opportunities for implementation of the YRRP's that are beneficial to landowners and the river system
- Coordinator will attend local District meetings and provide updates on Council activities and engage local boards in Council activities.
- Provide updates to local Conservation Districts and other stakeholder interests. Disseminate information through written correspondence and the Council's website.

Objective 3: Work with the Council to develop Working Groups that will implement the Recommended Practices or Position Statements specific to the Yellowstone River corridor.

- Work with group leaders of the Invasive Woody Plant Control and Irrigation Water Management working groups.
- Using the Recommended Practices document as a guide, communicate with local Conservation Districts and other stakeholders to gauge interest in specific projects in the river corridor and when appropriate, organize a project specific working group to implement the project.

Objective 4: YRCDC will provide leadership for restoration and water planning in the Yellowstone River Basin.

- Work with local Districts to disseminate YRRP's and Reach Assessments to local landowners and stakeholders to assist with restoration projects on the Yellowstone River where appropriate.
- Provide representation to the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee

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Explanation of the decision(s) that must be made regarding the proposed action (i.e. approve grant or loan and provide funding)

DNRC will approve the grant to provide funding for the Custer County Conservation District Resource Development Grant for the Yellowstone River Conservation Districts Council.

DNRC is not required to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for actions that qualify for a CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION or justified by a PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW; or are ACTIONS OF A SPECIAL NATURE (ARM 36.2.523(5)). These actions are subject to review for EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES that would require an EA or an EIS.

ACTIONS OF SPECIAL NATURE (ARM 36.2.523)

- ☒ Administrative actions: routine, clerical or similar functions of a department, including but not limited to administrative procurement, contracts for consulting services, and personnel actions.
- ☐ Minor repairs, operations, or maintenance of existing equipment or facilities.
- ☐ Investigation and enforcement: data collection, inspection of facilities or enforcement of environmental standards.
- ☐ Ministerial actions: actions in which the agency exercises no discretion, but rather acts upon a given state of facts in a prescribed manner.
- ☐ Actions that are primarily social or economic in nature and that do not otherwise affect the human environment.

The project listed above meets the definition of Actions of a Special Nature, Categorical Exclusion or Programmatic Review including specified conditions and Extraordinary Circumstances.

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HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1601**Prepared By:****Name:** Mary Hendrix**Date:** 8/9/2021**Approved By:****Name:** Mark Bostrom**Title:** CARD Division Administrator**Signature:**

DocuSigned by:

Mark W Bostrom

Date: 8/12/2021

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